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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 5069th meeting of the Security Council, held on 2 November 2004, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Guinea-Bissau", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council expresses its deep concern at developments in Guinea-Bissau that led to the killings, on 6 October 2004, of the Armed Forces Chief of Staff, General Verissimo Correia Seabra, and of the Chief of Human Resources, Colonel Domingos de Barros. The Council condemns in the strongest terms such use of force to settle differences or address grievances and, bearing in mind the position of the African Union on unconstitutional changes of government, as stated in the 1999 Algiers Declaration and the 2000 Lomé Declaration, calls upon the Guinean-Bissau parties to refrain from attempting to seize power in Guinea-Bissau by force.

"The Security Council takes note of the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding, in Bissau, on 10 October 2004, and of the establishment of a commission to monitor its implementation, and underlines that the Government of Guinea-Bissau and national authorities must remain committed to the promotion of the rule of law and to the fight against impunity, including when considering ways of implementing the above mentioned agreement.

"The Security Council urges all political parties to continue working, in good faith, with national authorities to complete the implementation of the Transitional Charter before the holding of presidential elections by April 2005.

"The Security Council reaffirms that peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau are critical for peace and security in the West African subregion. As the Government of Guinea-Bissau tackles the military, political, institutional and economic problems that are responsible for recurrent political turmoil and instability in Guinea-Bissau, the Council underlines the importance of addressing their root causes as well as finding immediate solutions to improve the situation in the short term.

"The Security Council stresses the need for urgent measures by the international community to assist the Government of Guinea-Bissau to overcome the present crisis, in particular to reinforce the capacity of legitimate authorities to maintain political stability and to determine sound solutions to the country's most urgent and fundamental challenges, particularly the

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restructuring of the Armed Forces, strengthening of the State and its institutions and promotion of social and economic development.

"The Security Council welcomes the timely financial support already provided by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its members to the Government of Guinea-Bissau towards the payment of salary arrears due to military personnel. The Council calls upon international donors to contribute urgently to the Government of Guinea-Bissau's budget for civil service and military salaries and also encourages them to contribute to the Emergency Economic Management Fund for Guinea-Bissau, managed by the UNDP.

"The Security Council also takes note, with appreciation, of the recent visit of a Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) fact-finding mission to Guinea-Bissau.

"The Security Council reiterates its call on the international community to maintain its confidence in the process of democratic consolidation in Guinea-Bissau and to uphold its commitments to development in that country, particularly through its active preparation and participation in the Round Table Conference scheduled to take place next December, in Brussels.

"The Security Council reaffirms its full support for the Representative of the Secretary-General in Guinea-Bissau and indicates its intention to consider suitable ways of improving the role of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) in the promotion of peace and security, as well as in the coordination of efforts aiming at social and economic development in the country.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to submit to the United Nations, in his next report on UNOGBIS and the situation in Guinea-Bissau, suggestions on what contribution the United Nations could make towards an active and coordinated international effort to assist Guinea-Bissau."